Witness Service

The Witness Charter

24 February 2026

Your rights as a witness: The Witness Charter

The Witness Charter sets out the standards of care you can expect to receive as a witness in a criminal court case in England and Wales.

It applies to both prosecution and defence witnesses, including character witnesses.

The Witness Charter covers many different service providers and agencies you'll come across in the criminal justice system. It includes:

- the police
- the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)
- staff in His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS)
- the Witness Service
- defence lawyers.

The key standards of care for witnesses include:

- being treated with dignity and respect at all times by all service providers
- having a main point of contact who will keep you informed of the progress of the case, and either support you or refer you to support services
- having a needs assessment conducted to identify any help you may need to give evidence
- being told how to claim expenses for travel to and from the court
- being told how to claim compensation for loss of earnings as a result of attending court
- receiving special measures if you're considered to be a vulnerable or intimidated witness
- being able to refresh your memory of what you said in your written or pre-recorded video statement before giving evidence
- being given information, or details of where information can be found, about the court and the court process.

You can find out more about the Witness Charter at the following links:

Download the Ministry of Justice: The Witness Charter (PDF)
Download the Gweinyddiaeth Cyfiawnder: Siarter y Tystion (PDF)

If you're the victim of a crime and will be giving evidence as a witness, you also have rights as set out in the **Victims' Code**.